

City of Berkley
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Building Department
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October 1, 2013

Michigan State Senate
Local Government and Elections Committee
P.O. Box 3006
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Senators:

I work for a small city in Oakland County. Berkley has required biennial rental registration and inspection since at least 1971. We charge a reasonable fee for registration and inspections. The fee has not been increased since 2007.

I'm very concerned about the proposed legislation (SB 313). We hear repeatedly that Michigan communities must compete in the global economy and therefore need to be a good place to do business in because today businesses can choose to locate anywhere.

But I think we also need to consider that business owners and their employees live and shop in these same communities. If the buildings in the community are not safe or as well kept as some others in other states or other countries, the business will choose to locate elsewhere.

Many stores and offices that are open to the public are rentals. Houses that are rented today may be sold tomorrow. Allowing building inspectors access to rental property on a regular basis keeps buildings safe and maintained. This is a benefit to the entire community, and a core responsibility of local government is the health, safety and welfare of its residents.

The challenge that is before decision makers throughout Michigan is to make our places (state, county, township, cities and villages) the most appealing they can be so that when the next Bill Gates or Henry Ford comes along, s/he chooses to locate in Michigan. I don't think s/he will do that if the building stock is not safe or is in sorry shape.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy M. Vansen".

Amy M. Vansen, AICP
City Planner